GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:296
ANSWERED ON:01.12.2015
Estimates of Tigers
Simha Shri Prathap

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the tiger population in the country is rapidly dwindling and if so, the details thereof, tiger reserve-wise;
(b) whether the Government is using camera trapping method over the pug mark method for conducting estimates of tigers in the country;
(c) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor; and
(d) the efforts taken or being taken by Government to improve wild life habitat so that spill over animals could reclaim the forest?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) FOR ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

(SHRI PRAKASH JAVADEKAR)

(a) No Sir. The assessment of the status of tigers, co-predators and their prey 2014 using the refined methodology has shown a countrywide 30% increase in tiger numbers with an estimated number of 2226 (range 1945-2491) as compared to 2010 estimation of 1706 (range 1520-1909 tigers). The details of tiger estimation pertaining to tiger landscapes in the country for the years 2010 and 2014 are at Annexure-I.
(b) & (c) Yes Sir. The current methodology of tiger estimation uses a double sampling approach to estimate the distribution and abundance of tigers in India, wherein robust spatially explicit capture recapture protocols using joint models have been employed. As first component, information is collected in first phase by ground surveys for determining occupancy of habitat patches by tigers and other predators, line transects to estimate prey abundance, sampling plots on the line transects to assess (habitat characteristics, human impacts and prey dung density).
Alongwith the information generated by the ground surveys, latest remotely sensed data on (a) landscape characteristics, (b) human "foot-print", and (c) habitat attributes are subsequently used to model tiger occupancy and abundance.
The second component of the double sampling consists of (a) scientifically rigorous abundance estimation in select sampling units using a remote camera trap based capture recapture technique for estimating tiger and other carnivore abundance and (b) line transect based Distance sampling for estimating prey abundance.
(d) Funding assistance is provided to the tiger reserves based on their Annual Plan of Operation as per the provisions of approved Tiger Conservation Plan, for various activities, which inter alia, includes habitat improvement works like weed eradication, removal of gregarious plant growth from grasslands, grass improvement, water retention structures and the like, besides for voluntary village relocation of people living in "core or critical tiger habitats" and fostering corridor conservation through restorative strategy to arrest habitat fragmentation.
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